



**U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515**

August 11, 2006

The Honorable Alberto Gonzales
Attorney General of the United States
Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, DC 20530

Dear Attorney General Gonzales,

I write to express my deep concerns about British Petroleum's (BP) recent announcement that it is experiencing severe maintenance problems that could lead to a shutdown of its Prudhoe Bay oilfield in Alaska – the nation's largest -- due to what the company refers to as "unexpectedly severe corrosion" in its pipelines.

The need for reliable domestic oil production is critically important for our national security and our economy. BP's announcement is particularly troubling in light of its admitted failure to test its pipeline for corrosion since 1992 – more than 14 years. As you know, the Prudhoe Bay site pumps 400,000 barrels of oil each day, representing approximately eight percent of domestic production. BP has indicated that production could be reduced or halted for months.

With oil companies experiencing record profits (BP reported a net profit of \$12.9 billion in the first half of 2006) the failure to invest in and ensure the integrity of this critical infrastructure is, at best, irresponsible behavior. Companies that lease land – whether that land is federal, state, or native -- have a responsibility to the taxpayers who own the land to observe the spirit of the contract. In BP's case, that means pumping oil in Prudhoe Bay, complying with environmental standards, and ensuring a level of domestic oil production.

It is my understanding that allegations of BP's poor maintenance practices are under federal investigation to determine if the company falsified records to cover up its failure to maintain its infrastructure. The American people have a right to expect that companies leasing public land will adhere to the highest ethical standards and I encourage you to pursue the circumstances that led to the temporary production stoppage in Prudhoe Bay.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Steve Chabot".

Steve Chabot